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C O N F I D E N T I A L VATICAN 001179

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SUBJECT: BIWEEKLY ACTIVITY REPORT FEBRUARY 15-MARCH 1

REF: VATICAN 1152

CLASSIFIED BY: CDA JOSEPH MERANTE, REASON 1.5 (B,D)

11. (C) THIS CABLE REPORTS ON EMBASSY VATICAN'S BIWEEKLY ACTIVITIES FOR THE PERIOD FEBRUARY 14-MARCH 1, 2002. IT IS INTENDED TO SUMMARIZE, BUT NOT EXHAUSTIVELY REPORT, OUR ACTIVITIES DURING THE PREVIOUS TWO WEEKS. COVERED IN THIS CABLE ARE:

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-- TRI-MISSION BIOTECH IWG  
-- SANT'EGIDIO DINNER IHO AMBASSADOR  
-- DCM ON TRAFFICKING CONFERENCE  
-- SECURITY ISSUES  
-- NEW VATICAN ME DIRECTOR  
-- CHINA RELIGIOUS FREEDOM  
-- CATHOLIC U IN TIRANA?  
-- VATICAN POL/MIL INITIATIVE  
-- REPORTING: PAPAL ARCHIVES, POTUS CHINA POINTS, VISA FACILITATION FOR WORLD YOUTH DAY.

12. (SBU) TRI-MISSION BIOTECH IWG: POLOFF AND ASSISTANT ATTENDED 02/15 TRI-MISSION IWG (EMBASSY ROME, FODAG AND EMBASSY VATICAN) LED BY EMBASSY ROME AGCOUNS, TO DEVELOP APPROACH ON AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY ISSUES. EMBASSY VATICAN WILL LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES (EXPERT SPEAKERS, DVC'S INVITATIONAL TRAVEL, ETC.) TO CARRY THE USG MESSAGE ON BIOTECHNOLOGY TO VATICAN DECISION-MAKERS IN COORDINATION WITH THE OTHER U.S. MISSIONS IN ROME.

13. (C) SANT'EGIDIO DINNER IHO AMBASSADOR: SANT'EGIDIO FOUNDER ANDREA RICCARDI HOSTED AMBASSADOR AND EMBOFFS TO RECOGNIZE CLOSE COOPERATION WITH THE USG. KEY EMBASSY INTERLOCUTORS INCLUDED DON VICENZO PAGLIA, BALKANS EXPERT AND BISHOP OF TERNI, AND AFRICA HAND DON MATTEO ZUPPI. RICCARDI AND ZUPPI RELATED RECENT AND PAST SANT'EGIDIO INTERACTIONS WITH FIDEL CASTRO.  
(SEPTEL TO FOLLOW)

14. (U) DCM ON TRAFFICKING CONFERENCE: DCM TRAVELED 02/19 TO FERRARA TO MEET WITH LOCAL CARITAS GROUP WHICH HAD HELD AN  
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ANTI-TRAFFICKING CONFERENCE IN 02/01. GAINED INSIGHTS FOR SIMILAR CONFERENCE EMBASSY VATICAN IS ORGANIZING FOR MAY.  
(REFTEL)

15. (U) DCM HOSTED NEW DIRECTOR OF MIDDLE EAST AFFAIRS, THOMAS COPPOLA, FOR LUNCH. COPPOLA'S PORTFOLIO IS CONSIDERED TO BE ONE OF THE MOST SENSITIVE IN THE MINISTRY. AS HAD FM TAURAN, COPPOLA SERVED AT THE NUNCIATURE IN LEBANON, AND WE SHOULD THEREFORE EXPECT CONTINUED ACTIVE VATICAN ENGAGEMENT WITH US IN THE ISSUES OF LEBANON AND SYRIA. (SEPTEL TO FOLLOW)

16. (U) SECURITY ISSUES: PSO ATTENDED ROME EAC AND WORKED WITH ROME RSO TO MAINTAIN HEIGHTENED SECURITY AT CHANCERY AND RESIDENCE.

17. (C) CHINA RELIGIOUS FREEDOM: POLOFF MET WITH FIDES CHINA EXPERT FATHER BERNARDO CERVELLERA AND SEPARATELY TAIWAN EMBOFF TO DISCUSS VATICAN CONCERNS ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN THE PRC. TAIWAN EMBOFF ADMITTED TAIWAN EMBASSY MAINTAINS DISCRETE CONTACTS WITH THE CIRCA 25 PRC SEMINARIANS SPONSORED BY THE VATICAN FOR CLERICAL TRAINING IN ROME (REFTEL).

18. (U) CATHOLIC U IN TIRANA? DCM AND POLOFF WERE TOLD 02/27 BY BALKANS DIRECTOR MARINO THAT THE GOA HAD DONATED, FOR \$1, A LARGE PLOT OF LAND IN ALBANIA OUTSIDE TIRANA FOR THE SITE OF A NEW CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY. MARINO SAID THE VATICAN SUPPORTS THIS PROJECT, AND THAT THE NEXT PHASE IS FOR THE TIRANA DIOCESE TO ORGANIZE AN ENDOWMENT FOR FUNDING CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATIONS. THE HOLY SEE ITSELF WOULD ONLY PROVIDE VERY LIMITED RESOURCES IN THAT REGARD. HE INQUIRED WHETHER PD/ECA HAD ANY PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT UNIVERSITY  
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DEVELOPMENT IN THE BALKANS OR THE DEVELOPING WORLD.

19. (U) VATICAN POL/MIL INITIATIVE: AMBASSADOR MET WITH

EMBASSY ROME DATTS TO MAP OUT STRATEGY FOR INCREASED VATICAN EXPOSURE TO CINSOC. AMBASSADOR PLANS APRIL 10 GATHERING AROUND PRESENTATION OF U.S. ARTIST'S PAINTING TO POPE, TO PUT BROAD SAMPLE OF VATICAN FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS IN CONTACT WITH CINSOC AND OTHER U.S. MEDITERRANEAN-BASED MILITARY OFFICERS.

110. (C) REPORTING: VATICAN 8819: VATICAN PARTIALLY OPENS WW II PAPAL ARCHIVES; VATICAN 826: FM TAURAN RAISES CHINA POINTS FOR POTUS' TRIP; VATICAN 1036: VATICAN SEEKS VISA FACILITATION FOR WORLD YOUTH DAY ATTENDEES. MERANTE

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